The Community Concert Association

Presents

THE LESLIE BELL SINGERS

DR. LESLIE R. BELL, *Director*

1952 1953

Program

MUSIC FOR WORSHIP and SPIRITUALS

I. Battle Hymn of the Republic . . . . . *Howe-Steffe*
Populo Meus, Quid Feci Tibi? . . . . . *Vittoria*
Let All the Nations Praise the Lord . . . . . *Leisring*
Kyrie, from "Missa Alma Patis" . . . . . *Gregorian*
Alleluia, from "Exultate" . . . . . *Mozart*
Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child } . . *Negro Spirituals*
Dry Bones }

Intermission

SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA

II. Rhapsody on Newfoundland Folk Songs . . . . . *Bell*
A la Claire Fontaine } . . *French Canadian Folk Songs*
Youppe, Youppe sur la Riviere }
Red Rosy Bush . . . . . *American Folk Song*

Soloist: JOYCE SULLIVAN

All the Things You Are . . . . . *Kern*
Country Style . . . . . *Van Heusen*

Intermission

MUSIC OF MANY MOODS

III. Beau Soir . . . . . *Debussy*
Eriskay Love Lilt } . . . . . *Hebridean Songs*
A Road to the Isles }
Le Fiacre . . . . . *Sablon*
The Old Songs . . . . . *Bell*
Homage to Gershwin . . . . . *Bell*

COMMUNITY CONCERTS Inc., 113 WEST 57TH ST., NEW YORK 19, N. Y.
WARD FRENCH, PRESIDENT ROBERT FERGUSON, EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT

a Carnegie Hall *In Every Town*

Program Notes

I.

Music for Worship and Spirituals

Art owes an incalculable debt to religion. For countless centuries, man has used literature, music, painting, and architecture as a means of expressing devotion to his Maker and in so doing has realized his greatest artistic triumphs. The following works are contrasting examples of the contributions made by the churches of Western civilization.

Battle Hymn of the Republic . . . . . *Howe-Steffe*

The exact origin of this fine melody is somewhat uncertain. Various words have been written for it but those of Julia Warde Howe published in 1862 are the best. Canadians and people of other lands consider the *Battle Hymn* one of the greatest songs ever to come out of the United States.

Populе Meus, Quid Feci Tibi? . . . . . *Vittoria*
(1535-1611)

Let All the Nations Praise the Lord . . . . . *Leisring-?*

Both of these works utilize antiphonal singing which requires that the chorus be divided into two groups. The employment of a hidden choir for echo effects is an old device in church music. It has been suggested that it originated in the attempt to represent the sound of the heavenly host singing to people on earth.

Kyrie, from "Missa Alma Pater . . . . . *Gregorian*
(11th Century)

Alleluia, from "Exultate" . . . . . *Mozart*
(1756-1791)

These two examples of Roman Catholic music were written 700 years apart. The simple unison, plainsong of the *Kyrie* is in decided contrast to the ornate *Alleluia* of Mozart which places emphasis more on vocal display than upon religious fervor.

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child }
Dry Bones } . . . . *Negro Spirituals*

The Spiritual is an example not of traditional liturgy but of the simple song of faith of the American Negro. Sometimes the negro's song is deeply melancholy as he broods upon the sins of this earth; at other times it is hysterically joyous as he gazes upward towards the heaven to come.

Intermission

II.

Songs of North America

The discovery of thousands of wonderful folk songs among the rural peoples of this continent and the creation of strong original melodies by urban composers both prove that North America can boast of a legacy of song as vital and individual as that of Europe.

Rhapsody on Newfoundland Folk Songs . . . . . *Bell*

The folk-music of Newfoundland, Canada's newest province, is all too little known. Cut off from the rest of the world by a rocky, twisted coastline, and an uninhabited interior, the Newfoundlanders have learned to entertain themselves and a frequently recurring theme is that of the sea and its place in the lives of the fishermen. Several of these melodies were discovered by Dr. Bell when visiting Newfoundland in 1947.

A la Claire Fontaine
Youppe, Youppe sur la Rivière . . . *French Canadian Folk Songs*

The French Canadians, a strongly nationalistic people, have lived in relative isolation and have developed their own songs which number in the thousands. The popularity of *A la Claire Fontaine* in Quebec stands second only to that of *Alouette. Youppe, Youppe* is also a great favorite.

Red Rosy Bush . . . . . *American Folk Song*

For sheer simple beauty no melodies can equal those of the American hills and plains. Songs such as *Red Rosy Bush* may have originated in Europe but they have undergone changes through the years which give them a truly American flavor. The soloist Joyce Sullivan is a well known figure on Canadian radio and television networks.

All the Things You Are . . . . . *Kern*

Country Style . . . . . *Van Heusen*

No apology is offered for including American popular music on this program. American popular songs have had a profound influence on the culture of the whole world and are an important contribution to music. The strength and individuality of *All the Things You Are* gives it the quality of a fine art song. *Country Style* is an example of the Western influence which has played such a great part in American music.

Intermission

III.

MUSIC OF MANY MOODS

The following numbers are selected from the vast repertoire which the Leslie Bell Singers have presented on their weekly network broadcasts and which also have found particular favor with Canadian concert audiences.

Beau Soir . . . . . *Debussy*

Debussy's understanding of the female voice is revealed in such sensitive writing as that of *Beau Soir.* In this arrangement, the original piano accompaniment is incorporated into the choral line as a vocalise.

Eriskay Love Lilt
A Road to the Isles . . . . . *Hebridean Songs*

These two songs are from the famous Scottish collection of Marjory Kennedy Fraser. The fact that a large number of Canadians are of Scottish origin makes such melodies immensely popular in Canada.

Le Fiacre . . . . . *Sablon*

Here, sung in French, is the story of a coquettish young wife who had a rendezvous in a coach but was discovered by her jealous husband. The voice of the coachman and the clopping of the horse's hooves form a vivid part of the arrangement.

The Old Songs . . . . . *Bell*

This number serves to introduce the Leslie Bell Girls' Quartet, a new unit which is meeting with great success on its own in Canadian radio.

Homage to Gershwin . . . . . .

The loss to music suffered by the premature death of George Gershwin in 1937 is only now becoming fully appreciated. Gershwin wrote music that was truly American and brought dignity to a type of song formerly associated only with the entertainment world. A Canadian choir pays tribute to a great American in a medley of songs and themes from Gershwin's best known works.

THE LESLIE BELL SINGERS

ORGANIZED in 1939 as a girls' choir, the Leslie Bell Singers first came into prominence as a result of its troop entertainment during World War II. Thousands of English and Canadian service men came to know this group and to vote it the most popular musical feature of the camps.

Since then their fame has spread far and wide. Their weekly network broadcasts have boasted the greatest listening audience in the history of Canadian radio and have been heard by countless listeners in the northern United States. So great has been their success that their sponsor, Canadian General Electric, is now presenting them on their own television program, the most elaborate and costly one yet produced in Canada. The tremendous popularity of their RCA Victor records has resulted in continually renewed contracts with that company, and their films, one of which was awarded first at the 1949 International Film Festival in Venice, have been seen all over the world.

By carefully auditioning thousands of girls, Dr. Bell has accumulated voices of unusual range which allow the group all the scope of a mixed chorus. Its consistent use of *a capella* music has won it the three qualities for which it is famous — tonal balance, accurate intonation, and flawless diction. These resources along with dramatic arrangements make possible effects never before associated with treble groups.

Leslie Bell, arranger, composer, director, journalist, teacher, and public speaker, turned from a professional career as an instrumentalist and conductor to University teaching. He is one of the leading figures in the development of Canadian school music and is responsible for several authorized text books. Utilizing his knowledge of orchestral tone color and dramatic effect, his arrangements have widened the potential field of choralism. Many of these are heard on the networks and in the schools of the United States, as well as in all parts of the world. American musical circles know him also as a guest conductor and speaker. Dr. Bell has also found time to win himself not only a doctor's degree in Music but a Master of Arts in English literature and, as an expressive outlet for this second love, he writes a weekly newspaper column on music which has an enormous following.

The choir is well-known on the Canadian concert stage and their guest appearances on the NBC and CBS networks here have won such high praise that they made an introductory concert tour of the United States last year. This proved so successful that this famous ensemble returns this season bringing a program that has been aptly described as "enchantment, glamour, beauty and choral virtuosity."

Choral Arrangements: LESLIE R. BELL, M.A., Mus. D.

Gowns by: SHERKIN, Toronto

Makeup and Hair Styling: WALTER THORNTON, Canada

Recordings: RCA VICTOR

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